6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Winters are long and cold, summers short and hot. Extreme temperature changes, up to 40 degrees, occur frequently during any season and within any twenty-four hour period. Winter temperatures, from November through March, average 24 degrees Fahrenheit but may go as low as 50 degrees below zero, while frequent chinook winds often raise the temperature to 50 degrees above and rapidly melt any accumulated snow. Summer temperatures range into the 100's but again, rapid fluctuations accompany sudden storms. The earliest frosts are apt to occur in September and the latest in May, giving an average of 100 to 102 frost free days annually. The area is subject to persistent westerly winds, which can attain velocities to seventy-five miles per hour.

All in all this is a region of definite and intense weather, be it hot, cold, wet, dry, calm, or windy. A man can either lean into the wind or go with it, either seek protection from the cold and heat or endure these when necessary. The climate is an environmental phenomenon that requires active accommodation.

Regional Population and Economy

The reservation includes portions of two counties. Approximately 70 percent of Glacier county's 2,974 square mile area and perhaps 40 to 45 percent of its about 12,000 population are included within reservation boundaries. The southern portion of the reservation incorporates approximately 17 percent of Pondera county's 1,643 square mile area and about 7 percent of its estimated 7,800 population. Major concentrations of people in the area are in its small towns, the largest of which is Cut Bank, the Glacier county seat, with a population nearing 5,000 persons, followed by Browning with an estimated 2,400, East Glacier near the western reservation line with perhaps 350, and Valier, the county seat of Pondera, with about 750 persons. Other towns and hamlets will be introduced later.

The main line of the Burlington-Northern Railroad (formerly the Great Northern Railway) from Chicago to the Pacific coast transverses the Blackfeet reservation, and major east-west U.S. Route 2, parallels the railroad. Both connect Browning, the major trade center on the reservation, with cities to the east and west. U.S. Route 89 runs through the reservation from north to south, connecting Browning with Canadian highways to Banff and Calgary to the north and providing rapid access to Great Falls, Montana, 125 miles to the southeast.

An airport at Cut Bank, 36 miles east of Browning and just across the reservation border, and landing strips on the reservation, at Starr School and Babb, are available to private and nonscheduled aircraft, and an additional air strip is planned for East Glacier. Scheduled airline service is available at Kalispel, 100 miles to the west, and at Great Falls.

Telephone, telegraph, radio and television provide ties into the network of national communication. Television comes in from Great Falls and from a Canadian station at Lethbridge, Alberta. Radio stations in both nearby towns and distant cities provide a variety of programs. *The Great Falls Tribune*, a daily, and weekly publications of *The Cut Bank Pioneer Press* and Browning's *Glacier Reporter*, provide newspaper coverage for reservation readers.

II

BACKGROUND

The Blackfeet Reservation, with headquarters in Browning, Montana, lies for the most part in Glacier County with a small portion on the south and east extending into Ponderosa County, Montana. Most of the Reservation is on the eastern side of Glacier National Park in northwest Montana adjacent to the province of Alberta, Canada. Miles of green range and farmlands fan out from the base of the Rockies to form the Reservation which covers a tract of land 52 by 58 miles (see Figures 1 and 2).

The Reservation is served by rail and air and both local and national bus lines, as well as several local and transcontinental trucking lines. A network of Federal, State and local highways provides ready access to the important markets of Great Falls, Shelby and Havre, Montana. A full range of utilities is available on the Reservation - telephones, a plentiful water supply, and natural gas from gas fields in nearby Montana and Alberta. Only the larger communities of Browning and Cut Bank have adequate sewer systems. Electricity is supplied by a cooperative electric company from power developed at the Fort Peck Dam in eastern Montana. Approximately 2,000 kilowatt hours of power are available on the western side of the Reservation with considerably more on the eastern side.

The average rainfall measures 14.4 inches per year in the Browning area and 13.8 inches in the lower and eastern parts of the Reservation. Annual snowfall is approximately 63 inches. Mean temperatures range from 19° F. above zero in January to 61° in July. Frost has been reported as late as May 19 and as early as July 16 during the last seventy years. The major part of the Reservation is subject to strong and persistent westerly winds which are usually more severe during the early spring months. Generally the climate on the Reservation is of the semiarid type. The average growing season for irrigated crops is approximately 120 days. While the economy on the Reservation revolves largely around agriculture, significant raw materials are available in and under the land surface. Oil and natural gas are found in the eastern portion of the Reservation's well known Cut Bank oil fields. The Choteau iron deposit extends from the foot of the Rockies over the western half of the Reservation. Its titanium content is approximately 12 percent and the iron content is from 30-40 percent. Coal reserves are estimated at approximately 50,000,000 short tons. Abundant recreational facilities are available for outdoor activities. The many lakes offer boating, swimming and fishing. There is big game and upland bird hunting during certain seasons of the year. The Blackfeet Tribe recognizes the value of this important tribal property with respect to its potential for future development. It represents 1,500,000 acres of gently rolling plain between 3,500 and 4,500 feet above sea level.

The population of the Blackfeet Reservation in 1960 was 4,900. Approximately 50 percent (800) of the adult males on the Reservation have been classified as skilled or semiskilled workers. An almost equal percentage of adult females, 60 percent (300), are likewise categorized. Wage rates for males in manufacturing areas have reached $2.21 per hour while female employment rates

Transportation and Communication

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[496] transverses the Blackfeet reservation, and a major east-west national
[366] highway, No. 2, parallels the railroad. Both connect Browning, the major trade center on the reservation, with cities to the east and west. U.S. Highway No. 89 runs through the reservation and Browning from north to south, connecting with Canadian highways to Banff and Calgary to the north and providing rapid access to Great Falls, Montana, 125 miles to the southeast.

508 An airport at Cut Bank, 36 miles east of Browning and just across the reservation border, provides airline service for the area, connecting with major airlines at Great Falls. Landing strips are available on the reservation, at Starr School and Babb, for private and non-scheduled planes.

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[206] the network of national communication. Television comes in from Great Falls and from a Canadian station at Lethbridge, Alberta. Radio stations in both nearby towns and distant cities provide a variety of programs.

Economy

311 Ranching and farming are the major economic pursuits of the
[433] people of these counties. The northern and western portions contain
[231] excellent natural grazing areas and are extensively used by both residents and outsiders for grazing of beef cattle, sheep and horses.
[241] The eastern third of Glacier county and the greater portion of Pondera are subject to lesser amounts of rainfall than the more westerly